

The Bitter Truth About ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Despite aspartame's dangerous side-effects, the US FDA continues to approve it while food and drug manufacturers find more ways to use it.

Are the facts being deliberately concealed from consumers?

Part 2

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In the mid-1970s it was discovered that the manufacturer of aspartame falsified studies in several ways. One of the techniques used was to cut tumours out of test animals and put the animals back in the study. Another technique used to falsify the studies was to list animals that had actually died as surviving the study. Thus, the data on brain tumours was likely worse than discussed above. In addition, Raymond Schroeder, a former employee of the manufacturer of aspartame, told the FDA on 13th July 1977 that the particles of DKP were so large that the rats could discriminate between the DKP and their normal diet.¹⁷

It is interesting to note that the incidence of brain tumours in persons over 65 years of age has increased 67 per cent between the years 1973 and 1990. Brain tumours in all age-groups have jumped 10 per cent. The greatest increase has come during the years 1985 to 1987.¹⁸ In his book, *Aspartame (NutraSweet): Is it Safe?*, H. J. Roberts, M.D. gives evidence that aspartame can cause a particularly dangerous form of cancer: primary lymphoma of the brain.

Diabetes

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is actually recommending this chemical poison to persons with diabetes. According to research conducted by H. J. Roberts (a diabetes specialist, member of the ADA and an authority on artificial sweeteners), aspartame:

- 1) leads to the precipitation of clinical diabetes;
- 2) causes poorer diabetic control in diabetics on insulin or oral drugs;
- 3) leads to the aggravation of diabetic complications such as retinopathy, cataracts, neuropathy and gastroparesis;
- 4) causes convulsions.

In a statement concerning the use of products containing aspartame by persons with diabetes and hypoglycaemia, Roberts says:

Unfortunately, many patients in my practice, and others seen in consultation, developed serious metabolic, neurologic and other complications that could be specifically attributed to using aspartame products.

This was evidenced by the loss of diabetic control, the intensification of hypoglycaemia, the occurrence of presumed 'insulin reactions' (including convulsions) that proved to be aspartame reactions, and the precipitation, aggravation or simulation of diabetic complications (especially impaired vision and neuropathy) while using these products.

Dramatic improvement of such features [occurs] after avoiding aspartame, and the prompt predictable recurrence of these problems [result] when the patient resumed aspartame products, knowingly or inadvertently.

Roberts goes on to say:

I regret the failure of other physicians and the American Diabetes Association to sound appropriate warnings to patients and consumers based on these repeated findings which have been described in my corporate-neutral studies and publications.

Russell Blaylock stated that excitotoxins such as those found in aspartame can precipitate diabetes in persons who are genetically susceptible to the disease.¹⁹

Emotional Disorders

A double-blind study of the effects of aspartame on persons with mood disorders was recently conducted by Dr Ralph G. Walton. Since the study wasn't funded/controlled by the makers of aspartame, The NutraSweet Company refused to sell him the aspartame. Walton was forced to obtain and certify it from an outside source.

The study showed a large increase in serious symptoms for persons taking aspartame. Since some of the symptoms were so serious, the Institutional Review Board had to stop the study. Three of the participants had said that they had been "poisoned" by aspartame.

Walton concludes that:

...individuals with mood disorders are particularly sensitive to this artificial sweetener; its use in this population should be discouraged.²⁰

Aware that the experiment could not be repeated because of the danger to the test subjects, Walton was recently quoted as saying:

I know it causes seizures. I'm convinced also that it definitely causes behavioural changes. I'm very angry that this substance is on the market. I personally question the reliability and validity of any studies funded by The NutraSweet Company.²¹

There are numerous reported cases of low brain serotonin levels, depression and other emotional disorders that have been linked to aspartame and often are relieved by stopping the intake of aspartame. Researchers have pointed out that an increase in phenylalanine levels in the brain, which can and does occur in persons without PKU, leads to a decreased level of the neurotransmitter, serotonin, which leads to a variety of emotional disorders. Dr William M. Pardridge of UCLA testified before the US Senate that a youth drinking four 16-ounce bottles of diet soda per day would have an enormous increase in phenylalanine levels.

Epilepsy/Seizures

With the large and growing number of seizures caused by aspartame, it is sad to see that the Epilepsy Foundation is promoting the 'safety' of aspartame. At Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 80 people were surveyed who had suffered seizures after ingesting aspartame. Community Nutrition Institute concluded the following about the survey:

These 80 cases meet the FDA's own definition of an imminent hazard to the public health, which requires the FDA to expeditiously remove a product from the market.

Both the US Air Force's magazine, *Flying Safety*, and the Navy's magazine, *Navy Physiology*, published articles warning about the many dangers of aspartame including the cumulative deleterious effects of methanol and the greater likelihood of birth defects. The articles note that the ingestion of aspartame can make pilots more susceptible to seizures and vertigo.²²

Articles sounding warnings about ingesting aspartame while flying have also appeared in the *National Business Aircraft Association Digest* (1993), *Aviation Medical Bulletin* (1988), *The Aviation Consumer* (1988), *Canadian General Aviation News* (1990), *Pacific Flyer* (1988), *General Aviation News* (1989), *Aviation Safety Digest* (1989), and *Plane & Pilot* (1990), and a paper warning about aspartame was presented at the 57th Annual Meeting of the Aerospace Medical Association (Gaffney, 1986).

Recently, a hotline was set up for pilots suffering from acute reactions to aspartame ingestion. Over 600 pilots have reported symptoms, including some who have reported suffering *grand mal* seizures in the cockpit due to aspartame.²³

One of the original studies on aspartame was performed in 1969

by an independent scientist, Dr Harry Waisman. He studied the effects of aspartame on infant primates. Out of the seven infant monkeys, one died after 300 days and five others had *grand mal* seizures. Of course, these negative findings were not submitted to the FDA during the approval process.²⁴

WHY DON'T WE HEAR ABOUT THESE THINGS?

The reasons many people do not hear about serious reactions to aspartame are twofold:

1) Lack of awareness by the general population. Aspartame-caused diseases are not reported in the newspapers like plane crashes. This is because these incidents occur **one at a time** in thousands of different locations across the US.

2) Most people do not associate their symptoms with the long-term use of aspartame. For the people who have killed a significant percentage of brain cells and thereby caused a chronic illness, there is no way that they would normally associate such an illness with aspartame consumption. How aspartame was approved is a lesson in how chemical and pharmaceutical companies can manipulate government agencies such as the FDA, 'bribe' organisations such as the American Dietetic Association, and flood the scientific community with flawed and fraudulent industry-sponsored studies funded by the makers of aspartame.

Erik Millstone, a researcher at the Science Policy Research Unit of Sussex University, UK, has compiled thousands

of pages of evidence, some of which has been obtained using the Freedom of Information Act,²⁵ showing:

- 1) Laboratory tests were faked and dangers were concealed.
- 2) Tumours were removed from animals, and animals that had died were 'restored to life' in laboratory records.
- 3) False and misleading statements were made to the FDA.
- 4) The two US attorneys given the task of bringing fraud charges against the aspartame manufacturer took positions with the manufacturer's law firm, letting the statute of limitations run out.
- 5) The Commissioner of the FDA overruled the objections of the FDA's own scientific board of inquiry. Shortly after that decision, he took a position with Burson-Marsteller, the firm in charge of public relations for G. D. Searle.

A Public Board of Inquiry (PBoI) was conducted in 1980. There were three scientists who reviewed the objections of Olney and Turner to the approval of aspartame. They voted unanimously against aspartame's approval. The FDA Commissioner, Dr Arthur Hull Hayes, Jr, then created a five-person Scientific Commission to review the PBoI findings. After it became clear that the Commission would uphold the PBoI's decision by a vote of 3 to 2, another person was added to the Commission, creating a deadlocked vote. This allowed the FDA Commissioner to break the deadlock and approve aspartame for dry goods in 1981.

Dr Jacqueline Verrett, the Senior Scientist in an FDA Bureau of Foods review team created in August 1977 to review the Bressler Report (a report that detailed G. D. Searle's abuses during the pre-approval testing), said:

It was pretty obvious that, somewhere along the line, the bureau officials were working up to a whitewash.

In 1987, Verrett testified before the US Senate, stating that the

Over 600 pilots have reported symptoms, including some who have reported suffering *grand mal* seizures in the cockpit due to aspartame.

experiments conducted by Searle were a "disaster". She said that her team was instructed **not** to comment on or be concerned with the overall validity of the studies. She stated that questions about birth defects have not been answered. She continued her testimony by discussing the fact that DKP has been shown to increase uterine polyps and change blood cholesterol, and that increasing the temperature of the product leads to an increase in production of DKP.²⁶

REVOLVING DOORS

The FDA and the manufacturers of aspartame have had a revolving door of employment for many years. In addition to the FDA Commissioner and two US attorneys leaving to take positions with companies connected with G. D. Searle, four other FDA officials connected with the approval of aspartame took positions connected with the NutraSweet industry between 1979 and 1982, including the Deputy FDA Commissioner, the Special Assistant to the FDA Commissioner, the Associate Director of the Bureau of Foods and Toxicology, and the attorney involved with the Public Board of Inquiry.²⁷

It is important to realise that this type of revolving-door activity has been going on for decades. The *Townsend Letter for Doctors* (11/92) reported on a study revealing that 37 of 49 top FDA officials who left the FDA took positions with companies they had regulated. They also reported that over 150 FDA officials owned stock in drug companies they were assigned to manage.

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Many organisations and universities receive large sums of money from companies connected to The NutraSweet Association, a group of companies promoting the use of aspartame. In January 1993, the American Dietetic Association received a US\$75,000 grant from The NutraSweet Company. The American Dietetic Association has stated that The NutraSweet Company writes their "facts" sheets.²⁸ Many other 'independent' organisations and researchers receive large sums of money from the manufacturers of aspartame. The American Diabetes Association received a large amount of money from NutraSweet, including money to run a cooking school in Chicago (presumably to teach diabetics how to use NutraSweet in their cooking).

A researcher in New England who pointed out the dangers of aspartame in the past is now a Monsanto consultant. Another researcher in the south-eastern US testified about the dangers of aspartame on foetuses. An investigative reporter was told to keep his mouth shut to avoid causing the loss of a large grant from a diet cola manufacturer in the NutraSweet Association.

What is the FDA doing to protect the consumer from the dangers of aspartame? Less than nothing.

In 1992, the FDA approved aspartame for use in malt beverages, breakfast cereals and refrigerated puddings and fillings. In 1993, the FDA approved aspartame for use in hard and soft candies, non-alcoholic flavoured beverages, tea beverages, fruit juices and concentrates, baked goods and baking mixes, and frostings, toppings and fillings for baked goods.

In 1991, the FDA banned the importation of stevia. The powder of the leaf has been used for hundreds of years as an alternative sweetener. It is used widely in Japan with no adverse effects. Scientists involved in reviewing stevia have declared it to be safe for human consumption—something which has been well-known in many parts of the world where it is not banned. Everyone that I have spoken with in regard to this issue believes that stevia was banned to keep the product from taking hold in the US and cutting into sales of aspartame.²⁹

What is the US Congress doing to protect the consumer from the dangers of aspartame? Nothing.

What is the US Administration (President) doing to protect the consumer from the dangers of aspartame? Nothing.

Aspartame consumption is not only a problem in the USA. It is being sold in over 70 countries throughout the world.

ASPARTAME CAN BE FOUND IN:

- instant breakfasts
- breath mints
- cereals
- sugar-free chewing gum
- cocoa mixes
- coffee beverages
- frozen desserts
- gelatin desserts
- juice beverages
- laxatives
- multivitamins
- milk drinks
- pharmaceuticals and supplements
- shake mixes
- soft drinks
- tabletop sweeteners
- tea beverages
- instant teas and coffees
- topping mixes
- wine coolers
- yoghurt

I have been told that aspartame has been found in products where it is **not** listed on the label. One must be particularly careful of pharmaceuticals and supplements. I have been informed that even some supplements made by well-known supplement manufacturers such as Twinlabs contain aspartame.

The information I have related above is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of damaging information about aspartame. In order for the reader to find out more, I have included some resources below.

Footnotes:

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- (* Note: Most titles available from the Aspartame Consumer Safety Network.)
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